



September 17, 2021

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary, Department of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
800 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, DC 20591

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

As our country emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, e-commerce continues to grow at rapid rates, and we look to improve the infrastructure of our nation, we must find ways to accelerate the pace of new technologies and the regulatory frameworks to support them. We write to you seeking your support on an issue where changes to DOT policy can have a substantial impact on the advancement of the integration of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) into our National Airspace System (NAS) and support our nation's goals of expanding infrastructure to support the growth of our economy.

The past several FAA Reauthorization Acts have asked the FAA to further the integration of UAS into our NAS. Many advancements have been made with rulemakings to allow for certain small UAS to operate at night, over people and for a broad range of commercial purposes. But many challenges still remain today, including rules for larger more traditional aircraft to be flown remotely. These larger aircraft can help increase the volume and reach of today's air logistics infrastructure while enhancing safety and providing proof points for future UAS rulemaking.

We urge you in your capacity as Secretary of Transportation to issue policy guidance that prioritizes resolving outstanding exemption requests and regulatory requirements that allow for American companies - including Part 135 operators - that are capable of safely demonstrating new infrastructure enhancements and improvements to our national airspace.

More specifically, the State of North Carolina, UPS and Xwing are pursuing an exemption (docket ID 2021-18661) from the FAA to allow experimentally certified aircraft, which can safely fly in the NAS today, to be allowed to carry commercial cargo under a Part 135 certificate. This same aircraft type is already proven across decades of flying commercially in the U.S. and will continue to operate with a safety pilot onboard to ensure the same levels of safety under routine Part 135 operations, just with the ability to be flown remotely. This work will enable the FAA, North Carolina and various commercial partners to expand the logistics infrastructure of the nation, prove the effectiveness of these operations and test a number of key technologies required for the safe integration of UAS. Examples of missions to be flown can include the delivery of critical medical supplies including COVID-19 vaccine supplies, disaster relief aid post hurricane, or the routine delivery of time sensitive cargo as the state expands its infrastructure.

North Carolina has been a hub for innovation in technology, aviation and across many sectors. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has led the way enabling advanced UAS missions through its participation in the FAA's UAS Integration Pilot Program. NCDOT accounted for more

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flights than all other lead participants combined while initiating several new ‘firsts’ in aviation with routine UAS medical package delivery in four communities across the state. NCDOT continues to demonstrate its leadership in the current FAA BEYOND program with sustained investment that supports innovative partners to initiate crucial UAS services beyond line of sight to provide equitable access to all communities for delivery of healthcare, food, relief supplies, and daily goods. We look to establish the U.S. as a leader in this new technology, well before our foreign competitors, while being close partners to the DOT & FAA in their advancements of the key principles of the coming American Jobs Plan.

We sincerely hope that you will do everything in your power to enable this important technology to serve the people of North Carolina, and the nation. If we can provide your team with any additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out. We are eager to working with you to solve this important issue and show the people of this nation the important work this administration is doing to create world leading infrastructure.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Basil Yap', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Basil Yap
President